

## Minutes of the Board of Sewer Commissioners Thursday May 19, 2016

The meeting of the Board of Sewer Commissioners was called to order by Chairman Michael R. Buxton at 6:05 p.m. In attendance were, Chairman Michael R. Buxton, Commissioner Philip L. Greene, and Superintendent Jay F. Reynolds. Commissioner George N. Dristiliaris arrived at 6:32 p.m.

The Board approved the minutes from April 21, 2016. Mr. Dristiliaris made the motion to approve and Mr. Greene seconded the motion. Motion approved.

The Board approved and signed the Sewer Permits.

The Board approved and signed CDM Smith invoices for payment, they are all contractual amounts. The invoices and amounts are as follows:

- Contract #31 (94984) \$1,805.10
- Contract #32 (102128) \$2,017.58
- Contract #32 (102129) \$24,050.91
- Task Order No.1 (111416) \$4,730.00
- CCTV-5 (112225) \$28,514.04.

Mr. Greene made the motion to approve and Mr. Buxton seconded the motion. Motion approved.

A discussion took place regarding 79 Harlem Street and 13 Gilmore Street. Mr. David Plourde appeared before the board to speak regarding the relocation of sewer lines on his property on 13 Gilmore Street and the property owned by his father, Norman Plourde, on 79 Harlem Street. The two properties are back to back and are tied directly into the Lowell Sewerage System. This connection was done in 1951 by Dracut Sewer, prior to sewerage being available on Gilmore Street (1976 - Contract 7). Mr. Plourde would like to connect into Gilmore Street due to tree root problems. As built plans indicate sewer stubs for both properties but there were no tie cards. There was a discussion regarding the current position of the stubs which are now over 40 years old. No one can speak to the decision of the placement of these stubs since the decisions predate the current members. Mr. Plourde alleged he was not asked during the time of construction but that fact is disputed by the Board. The normal process during construction requires a discussion to determine elevation and where the property owners want the stub. The Engineer would put it where the property owner requests. They would not put a random stub. It is suggested that perhaps Mr. Plourde declined the discussion at the time being satisfied with the tie into Lowell. The Sewer Department put a camera into the lines and discovered that they had put service T's in the main line but they were capped in the street. Both properties do not go through a meter to Lowell and are on the unmetered properties list. The Board recommended several options to Mr. Plourde. 1) The properties may remain with the original line and remain connected to Lowell. 2) The property located at 13 Gilmore Street can tie into the tap in the middle of Gilmore Street and the property at 79 Harlem Street can tie in at the main in the middle of Harlem Street. 3) Tie both properties into one line with an easement. The choice remains with the residents. There will be a charge of \$50.00 for a sewer repair permit for each property prior to the start of work and inspection fee paid by the contractor and a street permit issued by the DPW. Mr. Plourde will contact Jay Reynolds regarding his decision.

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Discussion taken out of order. A discussion took place regarding the vote to assemble Subcommittee Members to authorize Capital Funds Transfers. Mr. Reynolds will determine a date within the next week to find when a majority of members can attend. Mr. Greene made a motion to approve. Mr. Buxton seconded the motion for discussion. Diane Daigle gave the following overview to the Board. The Accounting Department keeps spreadsheets on the expenditures and progress of the projects. Between the two contracts, Contract 31 is almost done and Contract 32 is running into a deficit. Accounting needs to move \$657,000.00 from Contract 31 to Contract 32 and transfer \$443,000.00 from Greater Lowell Sanitary District Appropriation to Contract 32. It is necessary to obtain votes to make this entry. The Board took a vote for authorization of the Subcommittee to convene. The vote passed unanimously in favor.

A discussion took place regarding 127 Montaup Avenue. The resident of this property passed away in 2015. On October 27, 2015 the father came into the office to forward the sewer bills to the parent. This property is currently abandoned and in arrears on all bills. It is expected that the bank will foreclose on the property. The parents have made a request to have the sewer disconnected and abate the sewer charges. The Board declined this request.

A discussion took place regarding a time limit for the Grinder Pump Program. A decision regarding this matter was tabled from the last Sewer Commissioners meeting at the request of Mr. Dristiliaris for further discussion. Mr. Reynolds is seeking of obtain approval to send letters containing language that would inform residents when the Grinder Pump Program will end. Mr. Dristiliaris had reservations because of the high cost of the pump (\$4,000.00) when coupled with the higher connection fee (\$7,500.00) for those residents past the two year date. Mr. Buxton discussed that previously in the bylaws when a personal lift station was required, the property owner had to pay for it. To ease this expense to the property owners, the Sewer Commission arranged to pay for the grinder pumps and to date there have been hundreds of properties that have taken advantage of this opportunity. To allow ample opportunity for the remaining property owners to obtain grinder pumps at the Town's expense, where necessary, the following end dates have been mutually agree on and will be used for the end of the Grinder Pump Program. Contracts 1 through 30 will end 2/13/18. Contract 31 will end 2/13/18. Contract 32 will end 4/28/18. It is the recommendation of Mr. Buxton that the Board of Health take a look at the 17 properties prior to Contract 31. Possibly dye test to determine septic compliance. The Board requests draft copies of the letter for review at the next meeting. Approval will be determined at that time.

A discussion took place regarding a letter from Dan Copley as requested by Mr. Greene. This complaint had not been previously presented to the Board as was indicated to Mr. Greene and the Board had not voted against this claim as was indicated to Mr. Greene. An undated letter alleging damages by Albanese to a stone wall was sent to the Sewer Department. The circumstances predate the current Superintendent, Jay Reynolds. Upon receipt, Mr. Reynolds had a discussion with the resident engineer and it was determined that the damage was not caused by Albanese and this complaint had been visited some years before.



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A discussion took place regarding the Sewer User Rate Increase. In order to sustain the sewer system under the enterprise fund it is necessary to request a sewer user rate increase. It is the recommendation of the Superintendent and Finance Director that a rate increase is necessary to sustain the cost of the operation. The Sewer Commission is responsible to set the rates to pay for the debt and FY17 will recognize the highest level of debt. This debt will drop down dramatically over the next several years. The Commission may then revisit the rate and determine if it can then be reduced. The Superintendent recommends an increase of \$20.00 per quarter flat rate fee. The excess rate will remain unchanged. The quarterly discount will increase from \$10.00 to \$30.00 per quarter. Michael Buxton entertained a motion to increase Sewer Rates as outlined by the Superintendent for \$20.00 per quarter for flat rate accounts. Mr. Dristiliaris seconded the motion for discussion. The system is set up that it is paid for by its users. The bonds were authorized and the money was borrowed. The rate increase is required to cover this debt. The rate should be temporary depending on growth and the reduction that FY20 will realize. There cannot be a dependence on non-reoccurring revenues (permits) as this is not a sustainable source but instead to think in term of re-occurring revenues (rates) going forward. A vote took place. Mr. Buxton voted in the affirmative. Mr. Greene voted in the affirmative. Mr. Dristiliaris voted no. Vote to approve passed two to one.

A discussion took place regarding reimbursement of lines cut and capped by the Town as requested by Mr. Greene. It is his recommendation that when a property is cut and capped at the expense of the Town that we recover this cost at the time of reconnection. Mr. Reynolds will coordinate this procedure into the permit process at the time of reconnection.

A discussion took place regarding the Lakeview Junior High School sewer bill. The Finance director from the school department called with a billing inquiry. Their sewer bills show a significant spike every other bill. Mr. Reynolds investigated this occurrence with the water department. It was determined that the readings were correct. It was further determined that the spikes were caused by irrigation of the fields. The Junior High School is the only school that irrigates fields. The Dracut Water District will not allow for deduction meters. Mr. Reynolds was instructed by the Board to calculate an average sewer bill, deducting the months of June, July and August when school is not in session and the irrigation is taking place. This calculation will be presented to the Board at the next meeting.

A discussion took place regarding old business. The Board changed the Sewer Commissioners meeting time to 6:30 PM going forward. The Board will also consider the possibility of quarterly meetings in the future. Emergency meetings may be scheduled with an agenda and prior notice. Should any new sewer projects become active the Board would resume the monthly meeting structure to accommodate expenditure approvals and construction business. This schedule will be considered after the introduction of the new DPW Director. Mr. Reynolds reports that fencing is up at both pump stations for Contract 32. Albanese D&S is looking for additional compensation due to the fact that the fence at Cherrywood was extended. However a gate and shrubs were eliminated at Mammoth Road. These changes reflect a wash and the request will be denied. Contract 32 has reached substantial completion. The paving will be scheduled late June when school is out.

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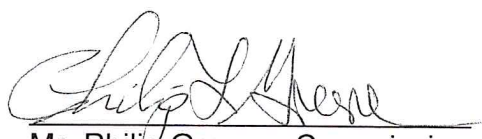
A discussion took place regarding new business. Mr. Dristiliaris proposed with the transition into the maintenance phase we seek statements of qualifications from different firms. There may be potential savings for engineering costs for smaller orders. Mr. Reynolds feels it is beneficial to remain with CDM Smith as they are the firm that started the project and there are still items that they are working on as well as the upcoming CCTV project that is going to be extensive. Mr. Buxton shared an article with the Board members regarding a municipality that did not keep up with sewer line maintenance and the substantial costs that came with this decision. It reflects the need for continued maintenance after construction is complete. To date the results of our camera line maintenance has shown positive results in phases one through four. Mr. Buxton asked when the contract for the inspection manhole for the pump line on Hildreth Street would be put out. Mr. Reynolds received a reasonable estimate from R.D. Vinal and will present it to the Board at the next meeting.

The next Sewer Commission Meeting will be held on June 16, 2016 at 6:30 pm.

The meeting adjourned 7:00 p.m.

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Michael R. Buxton, Chairman

  
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George Dristiliaris, Commissioner

  
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Mr. Philip Greene, Commissioner

"The matters listed above are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair that may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law."